

# The Hartford Seminary Foundation

## *Bulletin*



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## Stanzas for Communion

We thank Thee for the gift of life,  
Thou Well of living water;  
Teach us to choose in calm or strife,  
The way of life to follow.

We thank Thee for the gift of thought,  
Thou Spirit all-embracing;  
Direct our minds which Thou hast wrought,  
To contemplate Thy glory.

We thank Thee for the gift of speech,  
Thou Word in flesh indwelling;  
Help us in faith Thy Word to preach  
To every mortal being.

We thank Thee for the highest gift,  
O God, Thy Son Begotten;  
His life, His cross, His victory swift,  
Be our sole exultation.

F. L. B.

# Apologetic Theology — An Urgent Need for the Christian World Mission

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## INTRODUCTION

In the year 1812 five Americans sailed for India to establish the first American Protestant missionary work abroad. A century later, and especially with the decline of European churches after World War II, Protestantism the world over began to look to American Christians for leadership and support in the realm of the Christian world mission.

Parenthetically, one of the most encouraging signs of our time is the increasing use of the term "the Christian world mission," thus relating the overseas missionary enterprise to its domestic counterpart. It is to be noted, however, that in the curricula of many theological schools and seminaries missionary work is still regarded solely as a practical subject, without benefit of an adequate theological discipline. For the sake of the future of the Christian world mission, we must endeavor to develop a unified outlook integrating various dimensions—overseas and home, theoretical and practical. Thus, the strategy for the overseas missionary work must be seen as a part of the total dimension of the Christian world mission.

During the 1920's missions faced a crisis in the United States. The old fervor for missions had declined; subscriptions for missionary programs were falling off. And there was a widespread feeling that problems of the utmost gravity faced mission boards in nearly all fields.<sup>1</sup> This concern led to the publication of *Re-Thinking Missions*, which attempted: (a) To make an objective appraisal of [missionary] activities in the fields. . . ; (b) To observe the effect of Missions on the life of the peoples of the Orient; and (c) In the light of existing conditions . . . to work out a practical program for today.<sup>2</sup> If, in the 1930's, sincere laymen felt that rethinking and momentous decisions were necessary, we, in the 1950's, have to make a far more thorough reexamination of missions in the light of the contemporary world situation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Re-Thinking Missions*, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.



## CONTEMPORARY WORLD SITUATION

It does not take much imagination for us to see that the world is changing and that today we may be standing at the threshold of a new age. During the past fifty years the map of the world has been drawn and redrawn several times. Sultans and kings have disappeared, empires have been broken; old orders of society have been replaced by new. And the world is divided sharply into three sections—the Free World, the Communist World, and the “Uncommitted World” of Asia and Africa.

In the Free World, the center of gravity in political and economic domains has shifted from Western Europe to North America. This fact compels Americans to be astute in exercising leadership in political and economic spheres as well as in Christian world affairs. How to maintain a necessary tension and relation between religious and non-religious concerns is a uniquely difficult problem which confronts Christians in this country.

For a long time American Protestantism held a position of prestige in the missionary fields, especially in Asia and Africa. This was partly due to the generosity of American laity in their financial support of missionary work, but also because America as a nation was not involved in colonial imperialism. Today, rightly or wrongly, America is regarded by some Easterners as an heir to the European colonial interests.

Two years ago Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., said: “We’re simply too big to be ‘loved’ by other nations. . . . We can’t always win the popularity contest. What we want, though, is to be respected.”<sup>3</sup> In this connection we might remind ourselves that the only way to gain the respect of others is to respect others and that a realistic understanding of each other is the first step to mutual respect. And “understanding” is precisely what is lacking between Americans and peoples of the “Uncommitted World” of Asia and Africa.

### ASIA AND AMERICA

In recent years there have been heated controversies as to how and why China joined the Communist bloc, often ignoring the fact that such a decisive event did not take place suddenly. Thinking Easterners took a keen interest in two men who rose from the ruins of World War I as world leaders—Wilson and Lenin. Long before the tension between America and Russia became accentuated, these two alternatives became real options in the minds of ambitious Eastern leaders. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Chinese revolution, symbolized personally the tension between Democracy and Communism. It is safe to say, however, that by and large Eastern nations looked more to America as a sort of model for them. It was Wilsonian idealism which gave hope to the oppressed masses in Asia that had suffered under European colonial powers. In his “Pueblo Speech,” Wilson said, in part:

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<sup>3</sup> *Parade*, Nov. 1, 1953, p. 1.

... on last Decoration Day I went to a beautiful hillside near Paris, where was located the cemetery ... given over to the burial of the American dead. ... There was a little group of French women who had adopted those graves ... because they [American soldiers] died in the same cause—France was free and the world was free because Americans had come! I wish some men ... could feel the moral obligation that rests upon us ... to see it through to the end and make good their redemption of the world. For nothing less depends upon this decision, nothing less than the *liberation and salvation of the world*.<sup>4</sup> (Italics mine.)

Today, rightly or wrongly, many Asians take the view that the America of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson is a thing of the past. Just as Americans oversimplify the issues in Asia, by saying, for instance, Nehru is pro-Red and India is anti-democratic, Asians judge America by headlines across the ocean. Today America is represented by such diverse phenomena as movies from Hollywood, race tension in the South, machines and gadgets, and the Kinsey Report. America, which inspired the League of Nations and insisted on the rights and freedom of oppressed peoples in every corner of the earth, is being replaced, so some Asians have come to feel, by reactionary self-interests.

#### RELIGION IN THE WEST

Prof. F. S. C. Northrop in his book *The Taming of the Nations* states that Asians see modern Western "imperialism" as having three components: (1) political, (2) economic, and (3) cultural. He feels that while most Westerners recognize that the old days of Western *political* imperialism are over, there is not enough realization that the era of *economic* imperialism is also gone. However, Northrop's thesis is that the *cultural* component in Asia's fear of Western imperialism is the one least understood by Europeans and Americans. He says:

Witness General MacArthur's suggestion of the Christianization of Japan. Recall the public demand for a 'hard-hitting Voice of America' which will convert the rest of the world to the American way of life. All such suggestions strike the Asians as demonstrating that America and the West are withholding a political imperialism and slightly restraining an economic one merely to impose an even more dangerous cultural one.<sup>5</sup>

We must not dismiss such a sentiment on the part of some Easterners as Communist propaganda. It may be that we are compelled to interpret with greater clarity the nebulous relation between church and state or religion and culture, especially in the present "Indian summer of religious revival" in this country. A recent article in a popular magazine comments that:

Agnosticism ... is losing ground. (And so is atheism. Recent years have seen a growing rapport between religion and its one-time arch-enemy, science.)

<sup>4</sup> Richard D. Heffner: *A Documentary History of the United States*, The New American Library, 1952, p. 239.

<sup>5</sup> F. S. C. Northrop: *The Taming of the Nations*, New York, Macmillan, 1952 p. 67.



Religion's abandonment of anti-scientific dogmas, its acceptance of the findings of science as proof of the majesty of God, have made religion *acceptable* to many people who would have rejected it in former times.<sup>6</sup> (*Italics mine.*)

Similar quotations may be multiplied and impressive statistics may be disclosed by various religious groups concerning increases in membership, church attendance, and giving. On college campuses religious emphasis week has become popular again. Indeed, religion has become "acceptable" today.

To be sure, tensions still exist between religion and culture. Significantly, however, these tensions are often not defined in religious terms. It is culture which defines the tensions between church and state, religion and culture; and it is culture which "accepts" religion in the way culture defines the task of religion. And, consciously or unconsciously, some of our popular hucksters of the Gospel, as well as some ecclesiastical operators, have accepted the role of religion as defined by culture.

How then does the Christian faith define the tension and relation between religion and culture? Unfortunately, this remains a \$64 question. Two opposite views have been voiced recently. Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, executive director of international affairs for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A., in referring to Middle Eastern tensions, said: "The time has come, in my opinion, for representative Christians in the United States to sit down (either separately or jointly) with responsible leaders of the American Jewish community and with American nationals of Arab extraction." He further suggested that the governments should promote through the United Nations an "expanded program of technical assistance that would benefit both the Arabs and the Israelis."<sup>7</sup> In another speech Mr. Jerry Voorhis, a former California congressman and executive secretary of the Co-operative League of the United States of America, asserted that "it is blasphemy to use Christ or his church as apologists for any man-made economic order or political scheme of things."<sup>8</sup> According to Mr. Voorhis:

The church cannot join political parties or align herself with economic systems. She should seldom, if ever, attempt to provide specific answers. But she can and must set Christian goals and objectives, outline Christian methods and turn the light of Christian truth on evils.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, while Christians continue to debate the relations of religion and culture, practical decisions must be made by men who are both Christians and citizens at the same time. Our predicament is magnified during a national crisis. Indeed, when the chips are down, too many of us are patriots first and Christians second.

It may well be that we do not really understand the religious situation

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<sup>6</sup> "Three Faiths Answer the Unbeliever," *Coronet*, May, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> *Chicago Sun-Times*, Nov. 1, 1955, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

in America unless, as Professor Sidney Mead reminds us, we recognize a subterranean religion of Democracy which underlies all organized religions. The semantic problem of whether or not to call the American way of life a religion should not deter us from the realization that American people affirm a deep-felt faith "... that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and pursuit of Happiness." It is clear, then, that Americans as a nation are committed to the gospel of Democracy. While this nation is blessed with wealth and power, ultimately, it is American idealism which makes America the hope of the world. It is this idealism which enables American Christians to be forward-looking. Also, it is this idealism which finds practical expression in Marshall Aid, Point IV, and other humanitarian programs. Even the Christian missionary program undertaken by American mission boards must be seen in this context.

#### PREDICAMENT OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

For a long time, as Professor Bates has observed, Christian missions depended "consciously or unconsciously . . . on the general prestige of the nations and cultures from which its missionaries came."<sup>10</sup> In reference to America, it is safe to say that the genuine respect and prestige enjoyed by the United States in Asia during the early part of the twentieth century certainly helped Christian missionary work.

Today, the strength and power of the United States no longer serve as an "umbrella" for the missionary task in the Uncommitted World. Rather, America as the leading power of the Free World is regarded as a guardian of the former European colonial interests. And in this emotional situation, Christianity must be presented in such a way that it is more than an expression of a regional culture of the Free World bloc.

At the expense of oversimplification, it may be stated that Christians in America are committed to two gospels—Christian faith and American way of life. How to maintain a balance of the two is a task facing American Christians who are committed to Christian faith and also to the gospel of Democracy. Either one without the other is more manageable.

The phenomenal rise of the missionary enterprise among the conservative groups in America after World War II must be seen in this light. That they overstate their case is taken for granted. In their motivation and intention, however, there is a serious attempt to divorce the gospel of Christ from Western culture. Already since the end of the war, these conservative groups have doubled if not tripled their missionary work abroad.

The gospel of Democracy has found advocates among all walks of life, motivated to be sure by different objectives. They are not against Christian missionary work as such; they are convinced, however, that democracy

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<sup>10</sup> M. Searles Bates: *Annual Lectures at the School of Religion, Butler University*, p. 70.



—with or without Christian missionary work—is the answer to the world's problems. Realistic analysis and courageous opinions have been raised by spokesmen of the Democratic faith. In his book, *Call to Greatness*, Adlai Stevenson says, in part:

. . . much of the world in Asia, Africa and the Middle East . . . is trying to telescope centuries into decades, trying to catch up with the Western industrial and technological revolutions overnight and under much more difficult circumstances. And they are trying to accomplish this mighty transformation by the methods of consent, not coercion. A policy based just on anticommunism and military potency is not in the spirit of this great movement of the twentieth century and will win few hearts. The challenge for us is to identify ourselves with this social and human revolution, to encourage, aid and inspire the aspirations of half of mankind for better life, to guide these aspirations into paths that lead to freedom. To default would be disaster.<sup>11</sup>

Then he adds a word of wisdom. "To act coolly, intelligently and prudently in perilous circumstances is the test of a man or nation."<sup>12</sup>

Caught between these two alternatives—the fundamentalists and advocates of the Democratic faith—the major denominations in America have not developed imaginative insights or creative programs. Once liberal Christians took up the challenge in the field of missions. *Re-Thinking Missions* was the first important book on this subject written by Americans. Its strength and weakness must be understood in the mood of the 1920's and 1930's. Nevertheless, it was a genuine attempt to relate Christian faith to culture both in the East and West. *Re-Thinking Missions* raised many significant questions, but answers were given not by liberal Christians but primarily by the so-called Neo-Orthodox groups. Today denominational missionary leaders are preoccupied with the maintenance of large bureaucratic machines. On the local church level, many people still associate missions with special offerings, with sewing and knitting groups of women. Many professional mission promoters still present the image of a non-Christian as a heathen in need of medicine, clothing, education, and salvation. That such an approach is effective in raising money at home is no justification for misrepresenting the real issues confronting Christianity in the Uncommitted World.

#### EMERGING ASIA

It is widely recognized that today all of Asia is caught in the whirlwind of the "revolution of rising expectations." Also, in spite of the political independence recently gained by the Asian nations, the Western influences have left deeper cultural imprints than Asian nationalists are willing to acknowledge. Psychologically, however, Asians are pathologically sensitive to what they consider the residue of Western colonial interests. As the Manchester Guardian points out in connection with American aid to Asia: "The larger the gifts now offered by America, the greater

<sup>11</sup> Adlai E. Stevenson: *Call to Greatness*, New York: Harper, 1954, p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.



may be the suspicion and the more the conviction that the motive is political and military.”<sup>13</sup>

By the same token, to Asians, who are pre-occupied with their immediate problems, world-wide issues such as the post-war communist expansion in Eastern and Central Europe seem very remote. “Their outlook [is] overshadowed by past conflict with imperial powers; for them the greater fear [is] the entrenching of colonialism, and not the advent of a new and aggressive expansion [of Communism].”<sup>14</sup> Internally all Asian states face almost unsurmountable problems in the area of economic and social welfare. For instance, Mr. Nehru is reported to have said that “India’s liberal constitution will only last if the Indian economic plan can engender a sense of economic progress at least equal to that of China.”<sup>15</sup>

However, Communist expansion is not based only on economic factors. Mr. M. R. Masani asserts:

The fact that Communist propaganda is making much more headway among the bourgeoisie and prosperous groups, such as administrators, educators, and scientists, than among the peasantry and the working class lends support to the thesis . . . that it is not poverty or even starvation that primarily disposes men to the attraction of Communism. While the economic factors undoubtedly play a part, the basic motivations are psychological and emotional. It is the psychological and emotional void created by the looseness of the hold of the traditional religions of India that provides room for what is essentially a new religion of materialism.<sup>16</sup>

This is the case not only in India, but in other parts of Asia. Economic, social, political, psychological, cultural, and religious factors are interwoven in the present struggle of emerging Asia.

Some of the leaders of the traditional religions have accepted the challenge of the present crisis. Though heavily overburdened with age-old beliefs, practices, and institutions, Hinduism, for instance, is attempting to become the guiding principle of the new republic. Shinto and Confucianism have been so closely identified with Japanese and Chinese cultures respectively that they will have serious difficulties in developing into universal religious systems. In this respect Islam and Buddhism—two missionary religions—will play significant roles in the future of the Uncommitted World. What, then, should be the task of Christianity in this part of the world?

#### CHRISTIANITY IN ASIA

Prof. Soper, in his book, *The Philosophy of the Christian World Mission*, made the following prophecy:

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<sup>13</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, Dec. 23, 1954, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> N. Mansergh, “The Impact of Asian Membership,” *The Listener*, Dec. 8, 1954, p. 1001.

<sup>15</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, Dec. 23, 1954, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in W. MacMahon Ball: *Nationalism and Communism in East Asia*, Melbourne University Press, 1952, p. 199.

... the day will come when there will be no world mission in the sense in which we use the term today. Missionaries will no longer be sent to non-Christian lands, for the church will be so firmly established and Christianity so integrated with the various cultures that what we know as missions will not be needed. There will rather be a mutual interchange between the churches in different countries, each desiring and willing to share with the others its insights and experiences, and each feeling the need of the help which may come from the others in solving its own problems.<sup>17</sup>

However, as Dr. Soper himself suggests, that is a long way off. For the moment, Christians are tiny minorities in Asia, though perhaps significant minorities.

In recent years, the term "younger churches" has been used to refer to the native Christian churches in traditionally non-Christian Asia and Africa. In reality the younger churches are disguised forms of missionary churches, even though they are officially and financially becoming more and more autonomous and self-supporting.

Today, confronted by emotional nationalism and a resurgence of non-Christian religions, the younger churches have the difficult task of relating themselves to their own cultural environment on the one hand, and to world-wide Christendom on the other.

With the exception of some professional ecumenists, rank and file members of the younger churches have little understanding of the ecumenical movement or world-wide confessionalism. However, the need for a united Christian front is strongly felt by native Christians of different confessions, who together are such a small minority in a non-Christian environment. Thus, in Asia and Africa, today, there is a tendency to equate the ecumenical movement with such regional interdenominational cooperation. Also, so often—indeed, too often—this type of regional ecumenicity is an ecclesiastical expression of national pride, understandable to be sure in the light of heightened political consciousness in the Uncommitted World. Curiously enough, it is world-wide confessionalism with its international outlook, as seen in the Lutheran World Federation or Pan-Anglicanism, which acts as a corrective to ecumenical regionalism. Unfortunately, world-wide confessionalism is often suspected by regional ecumenists as a disguised form of ecclesiastical imperialism.

Among all the problems confronting the younger churches, by far the most fundamental is how to relate the Christian faith to non-Christian religions and cultures. It must be remembered that native Christians in the East have been taught Christianity in Western thought forms. There is little in their training which enables native Christian leaders to relate the Christian faith to the religious and cultural experiences of the Asiatic peoples. They still remember vividly the early European missionaries who

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<sup>17</sup> Edmund Davison Soper: *The Philosophy of The Christian World Mission*, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, pp. 281-282.



with their pietistic background taught what Richard Niebuhr calls "Christ against culture." Yet, many native Christians seriously question the view that the religious and cultural experiences of their non-Christian forefathers have no spiritual significance or should be repudiated in the light of the Christian faith.

### NON-CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC THEOLOGY

While Christian theologians are debating the question of "continuity vs. dis-continuity" or "Hocking vs. Kraemer," non-Christian theologians have been articulating their own views of Christianity. At one time a Western Christian missionary in India presented Christianity as the "Crown of Hinduism." Today Hindu theologians claim that Christianity must be fulfilled in Hinduism.

In this connection, Tillich's distinction between two types of theology—kerygmatic and apologetic—may be meaningful. He says that in the Kerygmatic theology, the Kerygma (the message) is reproduced, interpreted, and organized either in predominantly biblical terms or in terms taken from the classical tradition; in the Apologetic theology, he says, the Kerygma is related to the prephilosophical interpretation of reality.

Historically, Eastern religions had only Kerygmatic theologies. In recent years, however, non-Christians have been developing "apologetic theologies," addressing themselves to the claim of Christianity. They are not suggesting that Christianity is wrong; rather, they insist that non-Christians can embrace Christianity and understand it more fully than Christians do.

In his recent book, *Recovery of Faith*, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan interprets Christianity in terms of Hindu theology. He says:

The saving knowledge of God is not knowledge of and faith in Jesus as a historic person portrayed in the Gospels . . . . Christ is the spirit of the Supreme, the Eternal word. . . .

Christian religion is the continuation and restoration of the ancient religions, of something eternal, the Law which Christ came to fulfill but not to destroy. . . . To be a Christian is not the profession of an outward creed but the living of an inward life.<sup>18</sup>

Interpreting Christianity as *bhakti marga* or the way of devotion, Radhakrishnan says: "The Christian way is pre-eminently the way of devotion. It is analogous to the Mahayana Buddhist and the Hindu *bhakti* moments."<sup>19</sup> Then, he offers his own interpretation: "If the Supreme is viewed as the Absolute Reality, sin is not disobedience as Christians claim but alienation from one's true being and we regain peace by meditation."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Recovery of Faith*, pp. 159-160, Harper, 1955.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

Radhakrishnan compares the Mahabharata and St. Paul in presenting Christianity as *karma marga* or the way of action.<sup>21</sup>

In his section on "God-Men," he says:

By God-men we mean persons like Gautama the Buddha, Jesus the Christ. Their very names express a duality, that they are manifestations of the Spirit through a human medium which is a support of this manifestation. . . . The question arises in regard to the relation between the human and the divine aspects of their nature. The Absolute is reflected in the relative. Each manifestation is unique, is a relative Absolute. . . .

God-men are the precursors of the truly human. What is possible for a Gautama or a Jesus is possible for every human being. The nature of man receives its fulfilment in them. They are our elder brothers.<sup>22</sup>

No incarnation need be regarded as an isolated act of divine intervention. Karl Barth's conviction that there is no direct continuity between God and man misrepresents the teaching of Jesus that God is the Father of us all and there is a common element between us.<sup>23</sup>

. . . The idea of God made-man is at the centre of Christianity. The Son, the second person of the Trinity, is man universalized. Jesus Christ is God individualized.<sup>24</sup>

We must understand the significance of such a non-Christian Apologetic theology in relation to the lamentable theological climate of the younger churches. To many non-Christians and even to some Christians, Radhakrishnan sounds more attractive than awkward translations of Western theology. In a similar vein, D. T. Suzuki, a well known Zen Buddhist apologist, says:

When God saw the light which came out of his command, he said, "It is good." This appreciation on the part of God is the first awakening of consciousness in the world; in fact the beginning of the world itself. The mere separation of light and darkness does not demonstrate the beginning. The world starts only when there is a mind which appreciates, viz., a mind critically conscious of itself. This is also the eating of "the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden." The eating means "knowing good and evil," appraising the light and darkness, and in this appraisal, in this knowledge, there is the secret of living by Zen.<sup>25</sup>

Unless we understand this theological development within non-Christian religions, we cannot develop an adequate Christian missionary strategy for today.

#### PROCLAMATION AND COMMUNICATION OF THE TWO GOSPELS

In this connection it is my personal feeling that the "missionaries" of the Democratic Faith are more sensitive to the intricacies and the difficulties involved in propaganda and communication than are missionaries of the Christian Faith. For example, Adlai Stevenson suggests:

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>25</sup> D. T. Suzuki, *Living by Zen*, p. 13.



America's greatest contribution to human society has come not from her wealth or weapons or ambitions, but from her ideas. . . . In the words of Lincoln: It was not the mere separation of the colonies from the motherland, but the sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance.<sup>26</sup>

These words of Lincoln speak to the hearts of men and women of the Uncommitted World who are struggling to better their welfare.

However, Missionaries of the Christian Gospel have *not* been fully aware of Tillich's notion of Apologetic theology that "questions and answers must be correlated in such a way that the religious symbol is interpreted as the adequate answer to a question, implied in man's experience. . . ." How often missionaries go among non-Christian peoples and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus without giving answers to religious questions raised by non-Christians! I am not against the proclamation of the Gospel; I am suggesting, however, that proclamation unaccompanied by communication is meaningless. In other words, a Kerygmatic theology, no matter how loudly spoken, does not take the place of an Apologetic theology. And the task of Apologetic theology is to interpret Christ and His Gospel in terms of the experience of the men to whom the message is addressed.

To put it simply, both Christianity and non-Christian religions have Kerygmatic theologies which are understood fully only by those who are committed to their respective beliefs. Between the two, there must be Apologetic theologies, each interpreting its faith in terms of the other. And, as far as I can see, an Apologetic theology is not adequately developed on the Christian side.

The strategy of the Christian world Mission admittedly requires thorough re-examination and creative insight. The problems confronting Christianity are many and varied. I am not belittling the practical tasks of recruiting and training missionaries and administering missionary boards. I am, however, suggesting that a more fundamental task must be done in the area of apologetic theology, taking into account the theological climate of the non-Christian world and the revolutionary situation in which the whole world is involved. And, if I leave the impression that these are the tasks of the native Christians in the Uncommitted World alone, I do a great injustice to the cause. All of us, Christians in the West and in the East, are involved in the task of witnessing effectively and wisely in this turbulent era. We live in such a world today.

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<sup>26</sup> *Call to Greatness*, pp. 108-109.

# Testimony as a Source of Knowledge

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Epistemology constitutes one of the major fields of inquiry for philosophy and theology alike today. As Collingwood indicates:

The problem of method is one which has exercised philosophers from earliest times; but there are reasons for thinking it a problem of particular importance today. . . . The ferment of a new growth is at work. In the quantity and quality of the philosophical books now issuing from the press . . . our time can bear comparison with any other. . . . But in order that this promise should be redeemed, one thing is needed above all others: a patient and thorough reconsideration of the problem of method.<sup>1</sup>

"Method" means epistemology. The problem of knowledge—what we can know and how we can know it—is of crucial importance at the present time.

The nature of the problem may perhaps be most concisely indicated by contrasting the two extreme positions which philosophers and theologians (both of whom are merely putting into abstract form what constitute the presuppositions of the man on the street) can take on this question. On the one hand, there are those who rely entirely upon reason; on the other, there are those who trust completely in faith. The mere assumption that faith belongs properly to religion, and reason to philosophy, indicates a dichotomy which runs through both theology and philosophy at the present time. This distinction is not new; it is to be found in Descartes, Locke and Kant, and also in Aquinas. Today it is apparent in Logical Positivism, and it is clearly assumed in Dialectical Theology; both the Positivists and the Neo-orthodox are agreed that statements of faith are "nonsense," but they draw opposite conclusions therefrom.

Now to assume that a man can be either rational or religious, but not both at once, is dangerous. Not only does it point to a divided personality, but it renders the possibility of intelligent, long-range decisions on religious as well as ethical problems difficult if not impossible.<sup>2</sup> The agnostic who believes naively that the religious man acts on hunches, does not differ greatly from the theologian who maintains that faith is contrary if not contradictory to reason. If one must repudiate philosophy whenever one makes a religious decision, how can we square philosophy and religion?

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<sup>1</sup> R. G. Collingwood: *Essay on Philosophical Method*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> It must in fairness be admitted here that the Christian who holds to this dichotomy does not leave the individual stranded in his situation, but points to God's word for that situation.



How can we then even speak intelligently of religion, or how can we pursue truth in the ecstatic manner of a Socrates or a Plato?<sup>3</sup>

Today we are faced with the task of getting ourselves out of this dilemma, and the only way would appear to be through a re-examination of epistemology as a whole. We must somehow find a means of unifying faith and reason rather than dividing them. One such way is indicated, I believe, in the type of religion known as experimental. The most concise statement of this experimental epistemology is to be found in the writings of John Owen (1616-1683), but American theologians of the 18th and 19th centuries present the same point of view in a remarkably consistent manner.

Owen is a particularly appropriate representative for our purposes because he wrote shortly after the time of Descartes and was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, when John Locke was enrolled as a student. Thus the similarities and differences between Owen, on one hand, and Descartes and Locke on the other will illustrate the points to follow. Owen's theory of knowledge is briefly summarized in these words:

(There) are *three* ways whereby we *assent* unto anything that is proposed to us as true, and receive it as such:

1. By inbred principles of *natural light*, and the first rational actings of our minds. . . . In general, the mind . . . cannot but assent unto the prime dictates of the light of nature. . . . Thus doth the mind embrace in itself the general notions of moral good and evil, with the difference between them, however it practically complies not with what they guide unto . . . and so doth it assent unto many principles of reason, as that the whole is greater than the part, without admitting any debate about them.

2. By *rational consideration* of things externally proposed unto us. Herein the mind exerciseth its discursive faculty, gathering one thing out of another, and concluding one thing from another; and hereon it is able to assent unto what is proposed unto it in *various degrees of certainty*, according unto the nature and degree of the evidence it proceeds upon. Hence it hath a *certain knowledge* of some things; of others, an *opinion* or persuasion prevalent against the objections to the contrary, which it knows, and whose force it understands, which may be true or false.

3. By *faith*. This respects that power of our minds whereby we are able to assent unto anything as true which we have no first principles concerning, no inbred notions of, nor can from more known principles make unto ourselves any certain rational conclusions concerning them. This is our assent *upon testimony*, whereon we believe many things which no sense, inbred principles, nor reasonings of our own could either give us an acquaintance with nor an assurance of. And this *assent* also hath not only *various degrees*, but is also of *divers kinds*, according as the testimony in which it ariseth from and resteth on; as being *human* if that be *human*; and *divine* if that be *so also*.<sup>4</sup>

Two things should be noted: 1) Owen, like the Puritans in general, is very close to rationalism; 2) the difference between Owen and the ration-

<sup>3</sup> This point has been well stated by J. V. L. Casserley: *The Christian in Philosophy*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Owen: "The Reason of Faith," *On the Holy Spirit*, Pt. II, ch. 6 (*Works*, American edition, 1862, vol. IV, pp. 82-3).

alists lies in their respective attitudes toward the meaning and significance of faith.

1) In respect to the first point, the similarity between Owen and the rationalists should not be minimized. The "inbred principles of natural light" which constitute the first source of knowledge for Owen correspond exactly to the "clear and distinct" ideas of Descartes.<sup>5</sup> Pascal, who is not a rationalist, nevertheless seems to express a similar notion in his "reasons of the heart,"<sup>6</sup> a conception which has recurred in modern philosophy with Collingwood's "absolute presuppositions."<sup>7</sup> In Locke also we find this conception, in what he terms "intuitive Knowledge."<sup>8</sup> It was taken for granted by Owen, as well as by his contemporaries, that reason has autonomy within a certain sphere: that the existence of the self, for example, is so obvious as to be undeniable, that the distinction between right and wrong cannot honestly be denied by the intellect, and that such statements as, "For every effect there must be a cause," are perfectly rational and require no faith to assure their validity. These are first principles, clear and distinct ideas. In addition to this type of reason there is demonstrative knowledge, an example of which is the cosmological argument for the existence of God. The degree of certainty varies in the discursive use of reason, whereas with intuitive knowledge it is absolute. This kind of reason has less authority than the other, therefore. Owen would not have disagreed, I think, with Locke's statement that "we have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence, and a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of a God. . . ."<sup>9</sup> The rationalist is satisfied to leave the matter there, however. But this Owen could not have done, for if we have merely a demonstrative knowledge of a God, how can we explain our experience of regeneration by *the* God? The answer is not to be found in philosophy but in faith.

Before we discuss this aspect of the question, however, let us consider the importance of the similarity between the rationalist and experimental points of view. Of primary significance is the fact that both of them maintain that religious faith cannot be contrary to reason properly employed. If Locke can say,

Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason, has a right to be urged or assented to as a matter of faith, wherein reason hath nothing to do.<sup>10</sup>

Owen makes substantially the same statement:

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Descartes: *Discourse on Method*, IV; *Principles of Philosophy*, I, xlv.

<sup>6</sup> Pascal: *Pensees*, No. 282 (Modern Library).

<sup>7</sup> Collingwood: *Essay on Metaphysics*, pp. 31 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Locke: *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, IV, ii, I. (Everyman's edition.)

<sup>9</sup> Locke, *op. cit.*, IV, ix, 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, xviii, 10.

So if any pretend unto revelations by faith, which are contradictory unto the first principles of natural light, or reason in its proper exercise about its proper objects, it is a delusion.<sup>11</sup>

Both agree that faith has a higher authority than reason; both hold that faith cannot be irrational. Owen gives the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation as an example of the misuse of faith in this respect.

For it proposeth that as a revelation by faith, which is expressly contradictory unto our sense and reason in their proper exercise about their proper objects. And a supposition about the possibility of any such thing, would make the ways whereby God reveals and makes known himself, to cross and interfere with one another; which would leave us no certainty in anything divine or human.<sup>12</sup>

That this attitude is typical of the spokesmen for experimental religion can be seen by gleaning the works of Edwards, Dwight, Hopkins, and Finney, all of whom adhere to the conception of faith as assent to testimony and simultaneously emphasize the rational element in religion. Finney, for example, writes:

No one can believe that which he does not understand. It is impossible to believe that which is not so revealed to the mind, that the mind understands it. It has been erroneously assumed, that faith did not need light, that is, that it is not essential to faith that we understand the doctrines or facts that we are called upon to believe. . . . Any fact or doctrine not understood is like a proposition in an unknown tongue; it is impossible that the mind should receive or reject it, should believe or disbelieve it, until it is understood.<sup>13</sup>

2) The difference between Owen and the rationalists lies in their understanding of the meaning of faith. Descartes believed in the authority of faith, though obviously his interest lay elsewhere. It is unfair to assume that he paid lip-service to Christianity merely to protect himself from the Church, however.<sup>14</sup> Locke believed strongly in faith. "Whatsoever is divine revelation," he tells us, "ought to overrule all our opinions, prejudices, and interest, and hath a right to be received with full assent."<sup>15</sup> But how is one to know what is a divine revelation? Only reason can tell us:

. . . whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge. . . . There can be no evidence that any traditional revelation is of divine original, in the words we receive it, and in the sense we understand it, so clear and so certain as that of the principles of reason. . . .<sup>16</sup>

Not so with Owen. While faith cannot demand assent to the irrational, faith is a response to knowledge which comes to us in a different manner

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<sup>11</sup> Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Finney: *Lectures on Systematic Theology* (London 1851), p. 534.

<sup>14</sup> In my opinion Maritain has gone too far in this direction in *The Dream of Descartes*.

<sup>15</sup> Locke, *op. cit.*, IV, xviii, 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*



from logical propositions or first principles of rational truth. *Faith is assent to testimony.* The tests which are applicable to first principles and demonstrations alike cannot be used here, though we might wish they could be: here we must initially accept or reject the truth merely on the basis of the witness.<sup>17</sup>

When Owen speaks of testimony, he refers primarily to the testimony of Scripture. This does not mean that we must discard his theory of knowledge if we do not accept the Puritan doctrine of the infallible Word, however, for as Owen has declared, there are various kinds and degrees of testimony. The ultimate criterion is not the infallible book, but rather the Holy Spirit.

Owen's understanding of the meaning of faith is as follows:

Unto our faith God reveals himself by the Scripture. . . . And this revelation of God by his word, we confess, is not sufficient nor suited to evidence itself unto the light of nature, or the first principles of our understanding, so that by the bare proposal of it to be from God, we should by virtue of them immediately assent unto it, as men assent unto self-evident natural principles, as that the part is lesser than the whole, or the like. Nor doth it evidence itself unto our reason in its more natural exercise, as that by virtue thereof we can demonstratively conclude that it is from God, and that what is declared therein is certainly and infallibly true. . . . But the power of our souls whereunto it is proposed, is that whereby we can give an assent unto the truth upon the testimony of the proposer, *whereof we have no other evidence.*<sup>18</sup>

The clue to an understanding of this conception of faith lies in the words, "Thus saith the Lord." "Unto this kind of revelation," writes Owen, "'Thus saith the Lord,' is the only ground and reason of our assent; and that assent is the assent of faith, because it is resolved into testimony alone."<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the germ of this notion is to be found in Descartes' argument that God would not deceive us,<sup>20</sup> a statement which seems too stupid for a man of Descartes' perception to utter, unless he meant by it something other than what appears on the surface. We find it also in Locke, who may have learned it from Owen, though his interpretation of it is different:

Faith . . . is the assent to any proposition, not . . . made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God, in some extraordinary way of communication.<sup>21</sup>

But though these philosophers may intend more than lip-service to Christian belief, they contribute little more than this; for immediately they pass back into a rationalistic pattern of thought. It is fair to say that for them

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<sup>17</sup> "Initially"—for the validity and adequacy of faith must thereafter withstand the tests of intellect and experience. If they fail, the testimony must be rejected as false or insufficient.

<sup>18</sup> Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 88 (italics mine).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> Descartes: *Discourse, Meditation IV, V.*

<sup>21</sup> Locke, *op. cit.*, IV, xviii, 2.

faith does not yield knowledge which in any way can enlarge the scope of reason.

With Owen this is not the case. If we must accept the word of God on His terms, the results are efficacious for us. Assent to testimony yields genuine knowledge which enlarges the scope of our activity and renders positive action possible. Let us illustrate this with an example from ordinary life: The relationship between man and wife depends primarily upon the confidence each places in the other's word.<sup>22</sup> Two lovers bent upon analyzing their love find something other than what they had sought. "I love you," is a statement not subject to verification by purely intellectual methods: it cannot be subjected to logical deduction, nor does it comply with natural principles of reason. Yet the person who accepts or rejects—or even fails to respond to—such a statement is thereby changed for good or ill. If he trusts the other and is deceived, unhappy consequences will follow; if the trust is met by fidelity, other results will obtain: in either case, though the words be taken on faith, genuine knowledge has been gained, and this has affected the whole of one's life, not merely one's faith in other people.

This is what Owen points to in his writing. This is the heart of the experimental type of religion. If we would know God, we must accept His testimony as it comes to us; but it does not come through the ontological or cosmological arguments, nor through inductive reasoning. It comes through personal communication. This communication, or communion, nonetheless reveals God, and does so in a more complete way than a rational argument could possibly do. Jonathan Edwards expresses this point of view beautifully in this way:

To depend upon the word of another person, imports two things: First, to be sensible how greatly it concerns us, and how much our interest and happiness really depend upon the truth of it; and, secondly, to depend upon the word of another, is so to believe it, as to dare to act upon it, as if it were really true.<sup>23</sup>

In another place Edwards remarks that "Faith in God, is expressed in praying to God,"<sup>24</sup> a statement which is strikingly similar to Marcel's phrase, that "to pray to God is without question the only way to think of God. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

Let us not forget what has been mentioned above, namely that faith in testimony does not contradict reason. The example of the trust which the lover places in the beloved is applicable here. The testimony is only as

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<sup>22</sup> 'Confidence' is the central theme of Dwight's sermon on "The Nature of Faith" (*Works*, 12th ed., vol. II, pp. 335 ff.)—"By Faith we intend Confidence in the moral character of God and the Redeemer."

<sup>23</sup> Edwards: *Observations concerning Faith* (*Works*, 1844, vol. II, p. 607).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 613.

<sup>25</sup> Marcel: *Being and Having*, pp. 31 ff.

good as the witness. The young girl who believes everything she is told by a much-married man is exercising faith, but a faith which is misplaced and unsupported by evidence. The diplomat who takes a tyrant at his word is a poor statesman because of his gullibility. Now one of the contributions which those theologians who promulgated the experimental type of religion can offer us today is a religious faith which must be in accord with actual experience rather than contradictory to it.

In modern times it is perhaps not unnatural for men to question the veracity of God, for this is an age of scepticism about most things; but for Descartes and Locke to have doubted the word of God was out of the question. How can God be God and yet deceive? It is Satan who deceives, not God. This habit of mind was still current in the middle of the last century, amongst theologians at least, when Finney could write:

All truths known to man are divinely revealed to him in some sense, but here we speak of . . . the class of truths (which) rest wholly upon the testimony of God, and are truths of pure inspiration. Some of these truths are above reason, in the sense that reason can, *a priori*, neither affirm nor deny them.

When it is ascertained that God has asserted them, the mind needs no other evidence of their truth, because by a necessary law of the intellect, all men affirm the veracity of God. But for this . . . men could not rest upon the simple testimony of God, but would ask for evidence that God is to be believed. But such is the nature of mind, as constituted by the Creator, that no moral agent needs proof that God's testimony ought to be received. Let it once be settled that God has declared a fact, or truth, and this is, with every moral agent, all he needs.<sup>26</sup>

Thus the testimony of God is held to be true and dependable, simply because it is God who gives it. The question, then, is to determine, as Locke indicated, just what is God's testimony and what is not. This leads us to the final aspect of the theory of knowledge which distinguishes Owen, and those who think like him, from the rationalists.

### TESTIMONY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

We cannot fully comprehend this particular theory of knowledge without including the Augustinian notions of illumination and voluntarism, for it is with these tools that Owen seeks to answer the critical question, "How do we know it is God and not ourselves speaking in this situation?"

The thing we miss most in rationalism is the recognition of the Holy Spirit as the source of knowledge and wisdom. Truly enough, our knowledge comes through sense perception and the active reason, but what is it that makes us *aware* of our situation? How is it possible for us to form concepts, think abstractly, and communicate with others by means of signs and symbols? Augustine's analysis of this problem has been revived by

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<sup>26</sup> Finney: *op. cit.*, pp. 4 ff. Cp. Nietzsche's statement, made not much later in the century: "Could it be possible! This old saint in the forest hath not yet heard of it, that God is dead!" (*Zarathustra*, Prol. 2).



Husserl in the latter's phenomenological studies, but the rationalists ignored this aspect of the epistemological problem; and Husserl begins and ends with consciousness. Illumination for him is immanent, while for Augustine it is transcendent.

Let us examine the notion of Biblical infallibility characteristic of Calvinism until recent times. Calvin himself briefly stated that it is the Holy Spirit who makes known the infallibility of Scripture—a conception carried to great lengths by many of the Puritan divines. In Calvin's words,

... the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For, as God alone is a sufficient witness to himself in his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit.<sup>27</sup>

We must face the problem why it is that a passage of Scripture will be 'alive' for one person and not for another; or, why all at once a passage takes on meaning when in the past it had merely been 'there.' Though we may not, and probably do not, agree to the doctrine of Scriptural infallibility, we should not for that reason miss the significance of the insight which reveals the only manner in which the Bible can be infallible: namely, the illumination of the Holy Spirit. For the word, *illumination* therefore, we might properly substitute the phrase, *rendering meaningful*; because it is held by Calvin, Owen, and others in that line of thought that the Word of God is such to those whose inner eye has been enlightened, but not to all.

To this we must add the theory of voluntarism: that knowledge is an act, and that the mind is not a passive thing (as Locke had declared), but rather is like a searchlight which picks out objects and recognizes and remembers them. The importance of voluntarism to Owen's theory of knowledge lies in the fact that faith is seen to be of this active nature, and we are held responsible for its right employment. In the words of Finney,

Faith is the will's reception, and unbelief is the will's rejection, of truth. . . . Unbelief is the soul's withholding confidence from the truth and from the God of truth. It is the heart's rejection of evidence, and refusal to be influenced by it. . . . For if the mind knows, or supposes, that light may be had, on any question of duty, and does not make honest efforts to obtain it, this can be accounted for only by ascribing it to the will's reluctance to know the path of duty. In this case light is rejected. The mind has light so far as to know what more is proffered, but this proffered light is rejected. This is the sin of unbelief.<sup>28</sup>

To this Owen adds the further notion of regenerative experience ("saving faith"), a conception which reappears in modern theology particularly in the writings of Forsyth and Brunner. Assent to testimony entails submission to authority, yet the result is not blind submission, but a relation-

<sup>27</sup> Calvin: *Institutes*, I, vii, 4. In addition to Owen, cp. Thomas Goodwin's *Work of the Holy Spirit in our Redemption* and Robert Barclay's *Apology*.

<sup>28</sup> Finney, *op. cit.*, p. 538.

ship which becomes the more meaningful and understandable the longer it is sustained.

Hereby then doth the Holy Ghost so evidence the divine authority of the word, namely, by that divine power which it hath upon our souls and consciences, that we do surely acquiesce in it to be from God. . . . It distinguishes itself from the word of men, and evidences itself to be indeed the word of God by its effectual operation in them that believe. And he who hath this testimony in him hath a higher and more firm assurance of the truth, than what can be obtained by the force of external arguments, or the credit of human testimony. . . .

And . . . although a man may be furnished with external arguments of all sorts, concerning the divine . . . authority of Scriptures . . . yet if he have no experience in himself of its divine power, authority and efficacy, he neither doth nor can believe it to be the word of God in a due manner, with faith divine and supernatural. But he that hath this experience hath that testimony in himself which will never fail.<sup>29</sup>

The testimony of the Holy Spirit is *moral* testimony: i.e., it relates to matters of the will and not only to matters of fact. It is this note which characterizes Puritan and New England theology, as well as much of present-day Continental personalism and existentialism. What, then, distinguishes this moral testimony of the Spirit from Kant's Moral Law within? In a sense they are alike, insofar as both necessitate the treatment of people as moral, personal agents rather than as objects to be treated as means to an end. But morality for Kant could be put into the form of a law, while for this other way of thinking the higher morality is never a law, but always a relationship between responsible agents.<sup>30</sup> There is a significant difference between the Holy Spirit and the Moral Law within: the one is regenerative, while the other is merely normative. The one makes a higher kind of action possible, the other can only demand that action without supplying the means. Response to the one is through faith, to the other through reason. Faith in the testimony of the moral agent does not cancel reason, but belief in a moral law as final authority cancels the necessity for faith. The one opens new vistas of knowledge, the other closes doors.

Truly, as Owen indicates, the power to assent to the word of another person is the highest faculty in man.

There is an instinct in brute creatures, that hath some resemblance unto our inbred natural principles; and they will act that instinct, improved by experience, into a great likeness of reason in its exercise, although it be not so. But as unto the power or faculty of giving assent unto things on witness or testimony, there is nothing in the nature of irrational creatures that hath the least shadow of it or likeness unto it. And if our souls did want but this one

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<sup>29</sup> Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> The Puritans and those American theologians whom I have cited believed in Natural, or Moral Law; but in the terminology of Dwight, it is known through "common faith," while testimony is believed through "saving faith."

faculty of assenting unto truth upon testimony, all that remains would not be sufficient to conduct us through the affairs of this . . . life.<sup>31</sup>

The highest testimony, then, comes by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and may be accepted or rejected by each of us. We are required to act upon this type of knowledge, just as we must act upon the testimony of those we meet in daily life. Illumination of necessity is of this sort: understanding entails not only the physical ability to perceive, but also the active participation of the mind which singles out data from the background. That which the attention picks out, when it is of a personal nature, calls for acceptance or rejection; indifference is the worst of sins.

### CONCLUSION

Philosophers and theologians would do well to study anew the insights of the theologians whom I have mentioned, for they offer a theory of knowledge with attractive possibilities for our own times of doubt. The advantage of Owen's threefold distinction between intuitive, discursive, and personal knowledge lies in the fact that it does not disparage any of the three ways, nor even neglect one or another of them. Faith and reason are not ranged in opposition to one another, as they are today in Logical Positivism and Dialectical Theology. We are not asked to make a false choice between belief and knowledge, for the two are inseparable. On the other hand, perhaps here we have a means of answering the Logical Positivists, whose demands for logical consistency are a valuable contribution to the history of thought. We may say to them, and not merely in desperation, that what they say is true and good, but that their way to knowledge is but one of the paths which man must follow, and that personal knowledge requires not one but all possible avenues of approach.

It will be noted that there is a modern tendency to get back to this way of thinking. Marcel devotes a chapter to "Testimony" in his Gifford Lectures, and has a short essay on that subject in his small book on the *Philosophy of Existence*; yet his interest is in the testimony of the man in pursuit of truth rather than in the transcendent revelation itself. Berdyaev's *Beginning and the End* is closer to the spirit of experimental religion. Temple shows evidence of this sentiment in *Nature, Man, and God*. There is a difference in mood, nevertheless, between our modern thinkers and those earlier theologians: the difference between those who have reacted against rationalism in any form, on the one hand,<sup>32</sup> and those who shared the enthusiasm of Descartes and Locke in their new methods but went a step beyond them to include religion within their scope.

In our modern age of scientific discovery, which has proved the Cartesian method so fruitful, religious thinkers might profitably consider the

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<sup>31</sup> Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Temple entitles one of his chapters, "The Cartesian Faux-Pas" in *Nature, Man, and God*.



cleavage which exists in the minds of most of us between "facts" of reason and "facts" of religion; which, if we had to choose, would we take to be the most dependable and certain? Our rejection of Descartes and his successors has become a cliché in theology today, but is this true of non-religious thought? Perhaps Descartes was right, but only partially so. Perhaps his error was not to see, as Owen, for example, did, that religion also is a fact of experience, and that religious knowledge is of a slightly different sort from intuitive knowledge, but is not completely divorced from it.

To summarize, the theory of knowledge which I propose as most suggestive for philosophers and theologians today is one which is presented in the writings of John Owen. To the two kinds of knowledge admitted by rationalism (first principles and discursive reason,) he adds a third, based upon personal testimony. Testimony includes human as well as divine revelation, but the thing which distinguishes it is that it must be accepted upon faith, though it is thereafter subject to the tests of reason and practical experience. The testimony is only as sound as the witness, and for this reason one must first believe in God in order to believe in the validity of revelation through the Holy Spirit. This revelation comes through illumination, which demands an active choice of acceptance or denial by the recipient. We are responsible for our belief and unbelief. The testimony of God is not without its tests, however, and the final test is the experience of regeneration. Has one faith or not, and is it saving faith? Is one a better person, not only in his own eyes, but in the view of society? Because these questions must be asked and answered, knowledge through faith cannot be termed irrational.

In our age of specialization and functionalism, such a theory of knowledge which demands an integrated personality has much to commend it; for people realize today that the pursuit of truth is related to the desire for sanctification. And the concern for sanctity is apparent now as it has not been for many, many generations.

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## Campus Religious Workers' Conference

On Friday and Saturday, November 18-19, 1955, the Hartford Seminary Foundation sponsored a Campus Religious Workers' Conference to discuss the problem of recruitment on our college campuses for the church-centered vocations. Eleven colleges, five seminaries, and several church organizations sent delegates to the Conference which was attended by a total of thirty-five individuals.

Friday evening the group was addressed by the Rev. Walter D. Wagoner, Executive Director of the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowship Program sponsored on behalf of the American Association of Theological

Schools. Each year this Program selects some fifty college graduates of outstanding quality and offers them a free, experimental year in the accredited seminary of their choice. Men who have already made a decision for the Christian ministry are not eligible for the Program since it is intended to bring additional prospects to the ministry rather than to finance those already committed. After the experimental year men are free either to continue in seminary at their own expense or to withdraw without further obligation. From his association with this Program Mr. Wagoner was admirably qualified to discuss the recruitment of capable individuals for the church-centered vocations. His address was entitled, "A High Calling With A Low Response."

The Panel Discussion Saturday morning dealt with "Campus Recruitment: Problems and Opportunities." Different fields of interest were represented by the four members of the panel. Prof. James A. Gustafson of Yale Divinity School, who acted as chairman, spoke on "The Seminaries View Recruitment" using as background his special information acquired as Assistant Director of the Committee on Theological Education in America. The Rev. Thayer A. Greene, Chaplain at Amherst College, took as his subject, "Reflections on Campus Recruitment." Prof. J. Paul Williams of Mt. Holyoke College, dealt with "Recruitment Among The Coeds." Miss Margaret R. Blemker, a Corresponding Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and currently studying at the Kennedy School of Missions, spoke on "Recruitment for the World Parish."

The lively discussion which followed each meeting indicated widespread interest in the over-all problem. It was felt that the Conference had been a success in bringing together those most interested in the task of recruitment and in focusing their attention on the needs, problems, and opportunities of the task.

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# Migrants and Culture Change

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Profound changes in culture occur when migrant laborers from Latin America enter the American scene, changes which affect not only the migrant, but the native Anglo-American as well. The need for a ministry to migrant farm workers and to the people they serve is being met by local and state Councils of Churches across America. The author served with the Migrant Ministry of the Erie (Pa.) Council of Churches during the summer of 1955, and with the Service Committee of the Greater Hartford Council of Churches. This article is a record of the process of cultural change observed in the field.

Until recent years, the fruit farmers of Erie County in northwestern Pennsylvania could harvest their own crops, but now large-scale production, the high cost of farm machinery and of labor make migrant labor a *sine qua non* for the cultivation of beans, potatoes and tomatoes, of cherries, apples and grapes. And so it is that more than two million migrant farm workers come from south of the border each summer, not only to Erie County but to all of America, to contribute to the comfortable standard of living which we enjoy. It is often little realized that our own farmers are obliged to employ cheaper labor from Latin American countries where lower standards of living prevail in order to maintain their own well-being. The same basic economic problem faces both the farmer and the migrant. A basic insecurity is also shared, one that may be a source of friction, and is influenced by change in culture which affects both groups, a change known to the anthropologist as *lateralization*. What are some evidences of this change?

*Change in language.*—A high percentage of migrants from Mexico and Puerto Rico do not speak English. Yet even their short stay in Anglo-America makes them agents of change in the Spanish language. Words they use today may appear tomorrow in the standard dictionary. They all know what it means to *picar cherries*. They also know the difference between *piece-work* and *sixty-five-cents-an-hour*. They need no interpreter to understand and to use the word *trouble* when disputes arise with the farmer. They know that they cannot work if the *factory* does not receive the produce. The good Spanish word *Florida* is wrongly pronounced with accent on the antepenult instead of the penult because the *Yanquis* pronounce it that way. In athletics, they converse freely about *Joe Louis* and the *craque team de baise-ball*; *home-runear* is not a noun, but a verb. They have learned the rude phrase, *mate el umpire*. (Kill the umpire!)



*Change in mores.*—In the home community of some of the migrants, one can indulge in mutual calumniation without fear of legal chastisement, but in the Anglo-American community, some learn the hard way about libel suits and heavy fines. They are informed that the Yankee ethos does not countenance such personal and direct adjudication.

In our communities, common-law marriages are a source of constant concern to social workers and law-enforcement agents, but in the home environment of the migrants such informal relations may be the accepted norm. In that case, the only effective compulsion, legal codes being ineffective, is the threat of desertion when the law of mutuality or the bond of love breaks down.

Another source of conflict is the lack of knowledge on the part of the swains of a foreign culture of the accepted Anglo-American modes of courtship. Some have had to pay their hard-earned wages to lawyers who in turn, because of barriers of language and ethos, have difficulty in explaining the technical and legal charge of "risk of injury." Again, ambitious and impatient lads who want to buy *coches* and obtain a driver's license without a knowledge of English are rudely upbraided when they nonchalantly offer bribes to public officials.

The chaplain is also frequently troubled by the all-too-many migrants who are ready to gamble away their entire week's pay, or to frequent taverns with apartment-annexes. This is the result, in part, of new freedom found in another culture where social taboos are imperfectly understood. On the other hand, some farmers insist that, in such instances, the naive peasant is the victim of the underworld of the Anglo-American community.

*Change in the Anglo-American community.*—The Puerto Rican visitor has also exerted influence on his Erie County host. The community of North East, Pa., studied Spanish in order to understand the "strange neighbors" who came air-borne from Puerto Rico. Teachers, business men, farmers, policemen and social workers learned to appreciate the language and culture of the Puerto Ricans who were made full citizens in 1917. This group of friends was able to dispel fantastic myths about the "dangerous intruders who disrupt our standard of living." What is more, those who became acquainted with the migrants commend them as reliable harvesters worthy of moving upward in the social scale as so many foreigners have done in the past. In Erie County the farmer-migrant relationship has been most satisfactory. The two groups have worked together, played together, and also worshipped together. As interpreter, the chaplain was often directed by the migrants to tell the farmers that their personal interest was deeply appreciated, and that the farmers could expect them to return for the next harvest.

Attitudes toward Latin Americans change as understanding deepens. Law enforcement officers at times are worried when they see migrants

congregating on street corners, talking loudly and gesticulating excitedly. They have come to know, however, that these folks are not plotting the downfall of the government, but are only giving expression to their sociability. In lieu of a better place, the street corner is their club, their newspaper, and their church.

To hasten integration, migrants are advised not to wear fantastic-colored clothes. This, they are told, points to them as foreign. Yet to tell these people to wear sombre clothes is to ask them to lacerate their souls.

Despite differences, the Latin-American offers a positive contribution to Anglo-American culture. This was vividly demonstrated last summer when North East, Pa. celebrated its traditional Cherry Festival on August 8th. Of the several competing bands, one from Ontario, Canada, won the first prize. The selection played was Mexican. Marching to stirring tunes, the band advanced to front and center. One of them placed his black-plumed head-gear on the ground, donned a sombrero, and proceeded to perform a Mexican hat dance to the tune, *La Cucaracha*. Then the band departed to the plaintive tune of a dirge. It is quite possible that the judges saw in this performance a pleasing contrast to a depersonalized machine culture, a contrast which found enchantment in the human rhythm and personal expression of the dance, a will to freedom in the folk song, and a frank recognition of the tragic in the departing dirge.

*The Church, the migrant and cultural change.*—Anthropologists have made an interesting comparison between "nuclear America" (the culture of Mexico and Peru) and the ancient Greek world known as the *oikoumene*.<sup>1</sup> These are two vast self-contained systems of culture which have been enriched by diversity and diffusion, and which transcend time and space. In the divine providence, the human family is intended to be a world community, also transcending time and space. The Migrant Ministry is a practical expression of this conviction. The National Council of Churches, together with local councils, enlists five hundred chaplains to minister each year to the two million-odd migrants who harvest our crops. The migrant farm worker is called to be a member of the household of faith.

The Erie Council of Churches is also a center of distribution for government surplus farm supplies. Here is an economy which calls for change. Those who produce vital materials should have a greater share in the fruits of our whole culture. An increase in purchasing power of foreign groups who normally live too near the mere subsistence level could change an economy of scarcity to an economy of abundance. Ecumenics and economics are derived from the same Greek word, *oikos*. The former refers to the inhabitants of the same dwelling, the latter to the management of the available resources for the members of the household. World society

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<sup>1</sup> Willen, Gordon R., "The Prehistoric Civilizations of Nuclear America," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 57, pp. 571-572. June 1955.

is contingent upon a more equitable distribution of the vital resources to members of the entire household.

Seeing the intermingling of Latin and Anglo-American cultures, and observing the transformations which are produced in each, we may well realize that, while *lateralization* is a new term, the process to which it refers is universal and historical, a process which has influenced the ways of peoples and their societies and one in which we are all involved.

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## The Conference on Church Vocations

The need for more young men and women in full time service of the churches is generally recognized today. To present the opportunities and varieties of openings in Christian work, a conference on Church Vocations for college students was held on the campus December 2-4, 1955. Some dozen colleges were represented by 35 delegates who were entertained as guests of the Foundation from Friday afternoon through Sunday dinner.

Dean James M. Pike of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City presented the claim of Christian service in two graphic and arresting addresses, "The Church's Contemporary Task" and "Your Part in It."

Panel discussion with Foundation students and graduates explored the individual abilities and promptings of our visitors with regard to Christian service.

One of the high lights of the Conference was the fine fellowship between students on this campus and our guests. On Friday after the formal meeting all entered freely in an evening of square dancing, refreshments and small group buzz sessions.

On Saturday afternoon a tour of social agencies in Hartford and the part they play in rehabilitation was made under the direction of Professor Charles G. Chakerian of the Institute of Church Social Service. An informal tour of the campus introduced some of the delegates to the linguistic laboratory, the nursery school, library and craft rooms.

At the close of the Saturday evening gathering Professor Harvey McArthur, speaking to the subject "What about it?" brought home the personal application of the message Dean Pike had presented.

Foundation students, faculty members and guests attended church services on Sunday morning, many going to the First Congregational Church in West Hartford. At the close of the dinner in Hosmer Hall Charles Calcagni speaking for the student body extended the good wishes of the campus to our departing guests.

G. HOMER LANE,  
*Director of Field Work,*  
*The Hartford Theological Seminary.*



# Report from the Land of the Medes and Persians

J. MAURICE HOHLFELD  
PROFESSOR OF LINGUISTICS  
THE KENNEDY SCHOOL OF MISSIONS

*[Dr. J. Maurice Hohlfeld is Professor of Linguistics and Acting Dean of the Kennedy School of Missions of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. During his sabbatical leave, he and Mrs. Hohlfeld spent six months from February to July, 1955, at the Tehran (Iran) office of the Near East Foundation. He served this organization as Consultant in Adult Literacy Education. Much of the time was spent in giving instruction to the Iranian staff members and others in the field of readability techniques.]*

It is a common saying that "the book is the instrument of culture." Even before the days of Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes, the people of the Middle East were aware of the importance of the written and engraved scripts which served as means of communication. Yet those who could read were always a minority of any particular culture. In fact, one of the great problems of the Bible lands has been and still is the eradication of illiteracy among the masses. It is not uncommon to find that only from five to ten per cent of the inhabitants of a land can read the language they speak. Even a smaller group show ability to read a second or auxiliary language used in trade or government circles.

During the past ten years various agencies have been interested in raising the reading level of the peoples of Iran. The work of the Department of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education of Iran, the demonstration projects of the Near East Foundation, the technical assistance programs under the Foreign Operations Administration (Point 4), the contributions of the mission enterprise through the Committee on World Literacy, the activities of labor organizations, and, most recently, the National Literacy Campaign inaugurated by His Majesty, the Shah of Iran, have done much to interest the masses in the benefits of reading the printed page.

Ever since World War II, thousands have succeeded in developing their ability to transfer meaning from oral symbols to visual symbols. They have finished the primers and the elementary books provided by the agencies and the instructors. Now they approach the problem which forms the basis of this report.

"After we learn to read, then what?" That is a question of great concern to the villager and the village literacy worker alike. The newly-

literate, upon completing the primer and basic reader, asks "what next?" The teacher asks the same question.

Unfortunately, both student and teacher are quite aware that the next stage, at present, is an impossible hurdle. The conventional newspaper, the standard magazine, the contemporary novel and other reading matter in the languages of the Middle East are too difficult for the villager who has just learned to read. The printed media of communication reach a very small portion of the population. In many cases, this amounts to less than one-half of one per cent. Consider, for example, the estimate of an Iranian newsman who said that a leading newspaper of his country has a circulation of 20,000 copies among 20,000,000 people.

Moreover, many of the present-day publications of the Near East are still written in a pedantic style that is understood only by the learned man. To the villager, this is almost a foreign language. Of course, there is nothing wrong in maintaining a highly literary form of writing. But such literature presents a block to communication when placed in the hands of the newly literate. Finally, the content of available publications makes it necessary to possess a high degree of reading readiness before one can grasp the meaning of the printed page. Frequently the quotations, the references and idioms call for a large background of experience. This the simple dweller in the rural section (as well as those in the towns) does not have or may never achieve.

How then is the adult learner to continue developing his reading abilities? How can he avoid lapsing back into illiteracy? And how can he get reading matter that is written simply and interestingly?

Inasmuch as such printed matter is practically non-existent in the Middle East, it is necessary that the village worker, the rural teacher, the fundamental education specialist, the consultant for literacy programs, and others involved in adult education look for ways and means to supply the need. Much pioneer work will have to be undertaken, like that accomplished by the Near East Foundation in Iran during the first half of 1955.

At that time the problem of preparing, publishing and distributing developmental reading matter in Persian was considered for the Varamin Project.<sup>1</sup> During the past eight years about 150 literacy classes were held annually. Each year over 2,000 adult learners were able to pass the government tests ranging from Grades I to IV. The instructors used the Laubach Primer (1947), which was revised in 1954 by the present writer in cooperation with Mr. Khalil Anvari and the Literacy Team of the Committee on World Literacy, 156 Fifth Ave., New York. Many achieved facility in reading by using the Laubach Second Reader in Persian (1947). A much larger second reader was prepared by Mr. Jadidi and Mrs. Ann

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<sup>1</sup> The region of the Varamin Plain is about thirty miles south of Tehran. In this area are about 350 villages in which the Near East Foundation is conducting demonstration projects in the teaching of literacy.

Brink of the Tehran office of the Near East Foundation. This text was made possible after a valuable institute in simple journalism was conducted in 1954 by the eminent short-story writer, Margaret Lee Runbeck of Beverly Hills, California. The reader is called *Better Living*, and contains twenty-five stories dealing with village life and its improvement. The tales are graded according to reading ability.

The reaction to the revised primer and second reader (1954) was "too easy, too easy." That is, the new literate was able to identify, recognize and get meaning from the printed page in a short time. In only a few days he was able to finish the 24-page primer; only a few weeks to finish the 48-page reader, with the aid of a few hundred new words introduced on a slightly higher level.

Naturally, one, two or three books do not make up an imposing library. The primers and the readers were read over and over again. Thumb marks indicated an active and growing hunger for something else to read. They wanted something which they could understand and appreciate. The natural cry was for books and more books!

Once again the question was repeated, "what next?" Where do we go from here? Where can we get the books we need in order to keep up the habit of reading? The teachers asked, "who is going to write all these books? Books cost money. How long will it take before the writer is able to give his manuscript to the printer? How long will it take the printer to produce the books before he is able to deliver the copies to the hungry new literates? A month, a year, or longer?" By that time the adult learner will have lost interest, and will have lapsed back into illiteracy. He will be little better off than when he first started to unravel the mysteries of the letters. Then, too, who can foretell whether the book will be welcomed by the reader or not? After the work of preparation, publication and distribution has been completed, perhaps the book will be dull or too difficult to read.

Therefore, instead of concentrating on book production, the Educational Section of the Iranian demonstration project felt that a monthly magazine would be more useful and bring better results. Dr. John R. Williams, then head of the section, conceived the idea of a 24-page periodical for villagers. The name of the magazine was to be *Varamin Life*. An editor who had a great desire to help her people was asked to serve as head of the Publication Staff. Dr. Shamsol Molouk Mossaheb had gained much experience through study of rural education in several states of the United States after she had received her doctorate in Iranian language and literature from the University of Tehran. With this background, she was as editor able to launch the first rural-life magazine designed to be read by the villagers of the Varamin area.

Simple reading matters can be made simpler by drawings and illustrations, which serve as context clues. In order to help the new literates,



a local artist and illustrator was assigned by the Ministry of Education to draw some fifty to seventy sketches per monthly issue. These pen drawings enhanced the "story of the month," the practical articles on foods, *korsee* (an Iranian heating device), the historical sketches entitled "The Ancient Iranians," the "Recreation and Joke Page," as well as contributions from readers and the editor.

Five thousand copies of the first issue were printed in January, 1955. By the time the third issue was in preparation, many requests for subscriptions came from every corner of Iran. "Send 135 copies to Azerbaijan" was the translation of one order. To the south, some of the UNESCO workers were distributing the periodical to rural dwellers about Shiraz and Isfahan. Other requests for the publication came from Meshed and Kermanshah. In fact, one of the officials of the Department of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education in Tehran felt that the title was too limited in its distribution. Why call it *Varamin Life*? Only 350 villages could read it. Indeed, it could become a national rural magazine.

The idea took hold immediately. Thus, when the editorial staff was considering a fitting frontispiece for the third issue, they were unanimous in selecting one of the photographs of His Majesty the Shah and Her Majesty the Queen seated with village children in a rural school.

The publication was received with eagerness by villagers and townspeople alike. They liked the pictures. But alas, not all of the reading material was easy to read. Most of those who had passed the Fourth Grade examinations could understand all of the articles. Those of the lower levels were having quite a bit of difficulty. They did comment that they could understand the "Recreation and Joke Page." (According to readability tests administered later, this page always scored high in the degree of reading ease. The length of sentences and words, the use of human interest words and sentences were of such character that one could predict the results already obtained.)

What millions of villagers needed was a magazine which was written in simple Persian. That posed a great question. At the very outset, it was necessary to determine what is simple Persian? Who knows? Are there any objective yardsticks available? How can you evaluate a piece of written matter in order to predict that it will be easy and interesting for the new reader?

Curiously enough, some of the masters of Persian literature had tried to answer these questions over a thousand years ago. Calif Abdullah Mae'mun Rashid asked his vizir, "What is good writing?" The wise official replied "that which the common man can understand, and yet will satisfy the well-educated man." Thus spoke Hasan ebne Sahl of the famous Nobakht family. The question was asked in the 9th century A.D.

In the same source, entitled *Friend of the Writer (Anis el-Odaba*, p. 303), the minister comments on good speaking. Good speaking was

"that which the listener doesn't have to think about in order to understand the words. The meaning of every word is so clear and easy that he understands it as soon as he hears it." Writing and speaking are but two sides of the same coin of communication. Hence, what was said of speaking applies equally to writing.

Centuries later, Mullah Vi (Mullah Jalale Din Rumi, 1226-1294) advised that "in speaking to children you must speak the language of children." The principle for the village worker is the same. In writing for adult literates one must write in the language of the adult learners.

From the preceding references, it can be seen that writing simply, interestingly and clearly in Persian is not a new idea. On the other hand, it appears that down through the ages numerous writers, teachers and students have forgotten the good guidance of the authorities of the past. Much of present-day literature is written in stylistic forms that are quite unintelligible to most Iranians. If this is true for those who have had some formal schooling, how much more difficult it will be for those whose reading knowledge is limited to elementary reading levels!

Using the wealth of experience from the past, it is now possible to add to our store of knowledge gathered in recent days. Much linguistic insight has been gained through the structural analyses of written and spoken languages. This information from the linguist, plus the latest developments in adult psychology, make it possible to design formulae to help the editor to write interestingly and simply for the new literates. In the process of experimentation, several thousand Persian sentences were measured, tens of thousands of words were counted, and over a quarter million syllables analyzed. The results have been published in two languages (Persian and English). The book is entitled *Writing Simply in Farsi* (Persian) by Shamsol Molouk Mossaheb and J. Maurice Hohlfeld.

Many practical applications of the experimental formulae have been made. Succeeding issues of *Rural Life* have been made more readable and interesting. More requests have been received because each issue is easier to read than the former. Not only do the recently trained students enjoy the new art of communication, but those who are still climbing to higher grades find the magazine an answer to their reading hunger. An attempt has been made to vary the degrees of difficulty in presentation. As of now, the scale varies from Grades I to IV.

There is no doubt that the rising tide of literacy will make it imperative that more and more publications be produced for the mass of new readers. One answer to this staggering problem of communication is the rural magazine written in the language of the people.

# Joseph Bellamy and Theological Education

ELIZABETH DEW. ROOT  
ARCHIVIST  
THE CASE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Before the rise of the theological seminaries in early New England, it was a common custom for some well-known divine to offer instruction in his own home to prospective candidates for the ministry. The student would live in intimate contact with his master for a period of months, often after graduation from college, absorbing not only theological learning, but a goodly amount of the personality of the teacher. Several Connecticut ministers became noted theological teachers in this fashion, and gathered around them "schools of the Prophets." A pioneer in this method of theological education was Joseph Bellamy of Bethlehem.

Born in Cheshire, Conn., Feb. 20, 1719, he graduated from Yale in 1735 and studied theology under Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, under his own pastor, Samuel Hall, and under Chauncey Whittlesey of Wallingford. After being licensed by the New Haven East Association on May 31, 1737, he went to the "North Purchase" section of Woodbury for five months where the handful of settlers had petitioned the General Assembly for "winter privileges" for a meeting-house. Bellamy preached the first sermon delivered there on Nov. 2, 1738. Largely a result of his efforts, the eastern part of the "North Purchase" was incorporated by the General Assembly and named Bethlehem. Bellamy was called by the new congregation on Feb. 20, 1740 and accepted on March 12. The following month the church was formally organized, and Bellamy was ordained on April 2, 1740.

This was the time of the "Great Awakening" in New England. Swept by the wave of revival, people flocked to hear this powerful young preacher. In one of his church records, there is this entry:

1740-1741. Religion was revived greatly and flourished wonderfully. In 1740 every man, woman and child above 5 or 6 years old was under religious concern more or less; quarrels ended, frolics flung up, praying meetings began and matters of religion were all the talk. (*Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Connecticut*, New Haven, 1861, p. 348).

His personal appearance was dignified and commanding; his voice rich and strong, and his enunciation so clear that he could fill the largest house with ease. All his theological knowledge was at his command, and his manner, marked by deep sincerity and earnestness, made him constantly in



demand throughout the state and neighboring colonies. He was the first minister in the state to start a Sabbath school in his church, and to continue it through his entire ministry. But, apart from his contribution to the creation of the "New England theology," his greatest service was as a pioneer of theological education.

In the remote town of Bethlehem, Bellamy assisted young men in their theological studies from 1742 to 1786. Brought into prominence by the publication of his *True Religion Delineated* in 1750, his "school" became the most important in New England. His work, following that of Jonathan Edwards, was an exposition of the "sound theology of New England." It was a discussion of true religion, its distinction from counterfeits, and was a deep and masterly vindication of the Biblical doctrines of New England orthodoxy. His dwelling house became the training ground of some of the most distinguished ministers of early Connecticut. His method was penetrating and personal.

After some conference on religious subjects with those who applied for instruction, he gave them a number of questions on the leading and most essential subjects of religion, both natural and revealed, in form of a system. This system began with that which is the foundation of all true religion—the existence, unity, natural and moral attributes of God, and proceeded to the grounds, nature, extent and perfection of his providential and moral government of the world. . . . With a system of questions he directed their reading to such books on these leading questions, and spent his evenings in examining their difficulties, after which he directed them to write dissertations on each of the questions, pointing out their inaccuracies, and solving their problems when they could not give the correct answers. Then he led them to write sermons which he revised and corrected. (Thomas R. Richards, *Samuel J. Mills*, 1906) p. 3.)

His advice to students was direct and graphic. Once a group was returning from hearing Levi Hart preach. As they approached the end of their journey, Bellamy turned to Hart and said, "See that field of buckwheat?" "Yes, sir." "Well, that's your sermon." Another student had crowded too many topics into his first sermon. "Do you expect to preach again?" "Yes, sir. Why?" "Because if you do, you'll have nothing left to say. You've put your whole theology into one sermon." Another was too loud and boisterous. The teacher commented: "When I was young I thought it was the thunder that killed people; but when I grew older I found it was the lightning. So I determined to do what I advise you—thunder less and lighten more." (Percy Coe Eggleston, *Man of Bethlehem*, (1936) p. 14-15).

Other leading theological teachers during this period who were associated with Bellamy and who conducted similar "schools of the Prophets" were John Smalley of Berlin, Levi Hart of Preston, Asahel Hooker of Goshen, Samuel Hopkins of Rhode Island, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and Eleazar Wheelock, teacher of missionaries. Many of Bellamy's students

influenced the men who were instrumental in establishing the Theological Institute of Connecticut, the parent of the present Hartford Theological Seminary.

The letters and manuscript sermons of Bellamy were presented in 1893 to the Case Memorial Library by Elizabeth Bellamy Loomis of Greenfield, Mass., a great-granddaughter of Joseph Bellamy. This collection includes about 500 letters and sermons, not only by Bellamy, but by Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, John Erskine and other prominent pastors of 18th century New England. Two of these letters, one by Bellamy and one by Eleazar Wheelock to Bellamy, show the live concern with preserving doctrinal standards in the ministry which was a burning issue to New England orthodoxy in the eighteenth century.

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*Bethlehem, Oct. 1, 1761.*

To the Rev. Messrs. John Graham, Jon. Lee, Hez. Gold, C. M. Smith, and to the Worthy Messengers who may be called to assist with them in the Ordination of Mr. Wm. Hannah over a Presbyterian Congregation in Albany.

*Rev. and Beloved:*

These are to Certify you, that Mr. Wm. Hannah in free conversation with me about 15 months ago, with boldness and resolution asserted to me, that "Dr. Tillotson's<sup>1</sup> scheme of Religion will carry a Man to Heaven" and argued, I was obliged in Charity to believe so too—to which I replied "that Charity which prompts a Man to believe that that is the way to Heaven which the Bible says is not, is pregnant with infidelity. But the Bible teaches that Tillotson's Scheme is not the way to Heaven." He Denied that the Bible teaches so—to which I replied "it does according to the Presbyterian Confession of faith" turning to the Gentleman that was with him, who represented a Presbyterian Congregation that had called him to Settle on that plan, as I supposed—And many things I had Said to shew him (Mr. Hannah) the absolute inconsistency of the Hutchinsonian Scheme with the truth of Divine Revelation, which led on to this Declaration about Dr. Tillotson. So that I Charge Mr. Hannah with maintaining that "according to the Bible, Dr. Tillotson's Scheme will Carry a Man to Heaven."

Which to affirm, gives us the Calvinistic Scheme of Religion, as not Being the Religion of the Bible.

Tillotson's Scheme and the Calvinist Scheme are essentially Different thruout, therefore both Cannot be right. Both Cannot be one and the Same thing. But the Scripture Way to Heaven is but one.

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<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, 1603-1674, an illustrious "latitudinarian."



I apprehend no Members of our Consociation, who profess to Believe our Confession of faith, can consistent with their profession assist in the ordination of Mr. Hannah, and so that none of our Members would do so, if they knew him; therefore I give you this information, and am

Rev. and Beloved  
Yours sincerely  
JOSEPH BELLAMY

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[Mar. 13, 1749]

Rev. Sr. and Dear Br.

Yours of the 4th is before me. I thank you for it. There are many things that have a thretning aspect, upon our religious interests, in these parts. *Antinomian* principles, and the *Korab-like* claims of a Multitude which are the Usual concomitants of them. Prevailing *Worldliness* and *Coldness*, which is become a Comon Distemper among us. Growing *Immorality*, justified by the *Wildness* and *Errors* of Many high professors. A Want of promising *Candidates* for the Supply of vacant Churches, and the great Dissenting that comonly attend, the Settling of any Chiefly thro' the *Straithandedness* of people toward the Support of the Gospel—The Want of a good *Discipline* in our Churches and the Difficulty, upon Many Accounts of Reviving it, etc., etc. I am fully of the opinion that it is high time for Ministers wake up for a redress of these Evils. And I can think of No way more likely, than for those Who are in the Same Way of thinking about the Most important thing in Religion to Joyn in a Presbytery. Don't you see that *Arminian* Candidates can't Settle in the Ministry? Don't you see how Much those want the Patronage of a godly Presbytery, who do Settle? For Want of it they get broken Bones Which Will pain them all their Days. Would not Such a Presbytery soon have all the Candidates of Worth under them and Consequently, presently Most of the Vacant Churches? Our Wild people are Not half so much prejudiced against the Scottish Constitutions as against our Own. Many Churches in these parts might Easily be brot into it, and My Soul longs for it. As to the Comencement proposal I hear that our last Association (which I did not attend) appointed Messrs. Lebanon and Devotion to Draw up Something to Lay before them at their next Meeting, but I have Scarce heard any talk about it. For my own part I think it is high time that Men who are Treated as Mr. Robbins was, Shod have Some Way of Relief which I am Informed was that view of that honest Calvinist who first proved in the proposal, but Whether that good Design is Like to be Answered by it is indeed Worthy of Our Consideration.

Please in Your Next to Resolve the following Questions: 1. What